

# Beards that matter.

## Visual representations of Patriarch Ignatios in Byzantine art\*

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*The paper discusses twelve visual depictions that in all likelihood represent St. Ignatios of Constantinople and were created between the ninth and the thirteenth century. Most of these depictions show Patriarch Ignatios beardless, which reflects the fact that he was a eunuch of the ἐκτομίας category. The paper analyzes two iconographical elements distinctive of his portraits: beardlessness and youthful appearance. It concludes that, on the one hand, the artists who painted the beardless portraits of Ignatios strove to depict the saint as realistically as possible; while, on the other hand, his beardless and youthful appearance also had a metaphorical meaning and served to highlight the chastity and purity of the eunuch saint.*

*Key words: Patriarch Ignatios, eunuch, beard, iconography of saints, individualism*

Patriarch Ignatios of Constantinople was the youngest son of Emperor Michael I Rangabe (811–813). After Michael's abdication in 813, one of the first steps of his successor Leo V the Armenian (813–820) was to have Rangabe's sons castrated – the twenty-year-old Theophylaktos and fourteen-year-old Niketas. Both were forced to take monastic vows and sent to monasteries.<sup>1</sup> It was this turn of political events that led Niketas to take the monastic name Ignatios and begin his career in the church. He rose through the clerical ranks to the position of Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> Ignatios served two terms on the patriarchal throne: from July 3<sup>rd</sup> 847 to October 23<sup>rd</sup> 858 and from November 23<sup>rd</sup> 867 until his death on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 877. This tumultuous period was marked by various internal conflicts. On one hand, the conflict between Patriarch Ignatios and the members of the Amorion dynas-

ty, Emperor Michael III (842–867) and his uncle Caesar Bardas, led to the Patriarch's deposition. The appointment of the moderate Photios (c. 810/820 – 893), a relative of the Amorians,<sup>3</sup> as Ignatios's successor caused a bitter conflict in the Byzantine church that would not subside until shortly before Ignatios's death. On the other hand, the reinstatement of Patriarch Ignatios was closely connected to the political coup that resulted in the ascension of Basil I the Macedonian (867–886) to the throne.<sup>4</sup> It was these events and particularly Ignatios's torture in captivity under the Amorians that contributed to the emergence of the cult of St. Ignatios the Younger. Ignatios was canonized soon after his death and his feast day is celebrated on October 23<sup>rd</sup> according to the synaxarion of the church of Constantinople.<sup>5</sup>

The short-lived popularity of Patriarch Ignatios is also evidenced by a number of his surviving depictions in visual art, which are particularly noteworthy because they show a eunuch patriarch. Depictions of church dignitaries who were eunuchs are very scarce, either because they have been lost or because they defy identification. This is somewhat surprising in view of their numerous representatives in the ranks of the Byzantine church.<sup>6</sup> It is known that senior positions in the church were available to eunuchs and that some, such as Ignatios, were even canonized (Germanos, Methodios, Stephen, Theophylaktos).<sup>7</sup> In addition, the Byzantine Empire had special monasteries for eunuchs, which had a long tradition in the Empire, between sixth and eleventh-twelfth century, and were found even in Constantinople itself.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nicitae Davidis, *Vita Ignatii Patriarchae*, Greek text and transl. A. Smithies, comm. J. M. Duffy, Washington, D.C. 2013, 8. 9–10.

<sup>2</sup> *Prosopographie der mittel-byzantinischen Zeit* (PmbZ) I/2, Berlin – New York 2000, #2666; PmbZII/2, Berlin–Boston 2013, #22712.

<sup>3</sup> For Photios, see PmbZ I/3, #6253; II/5, #26667.

<sup>4</sup> P. Komatina, *Crkvena politika Vizantije od kraja ikonoborstva do smrti cara Vasilija*, Beograd 2014, 80–323.

<sup>5</sup> H. Delehay, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Bruxelles 1902, 158.

<sup>6</sup> The problem is discussed in the exhaustive study by Ch. Messis, *Les eunuques à Byzance, entre réalité et imaginaire*, Paris 2014, 119–209.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>8</sup> S. Tougher, 'The Angelic Life'. *Monasteries for eunuchs*, in: *Byzantine style, religion and civilization. In honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, ed. E. Jeffreys, Cambridge 2006, 238–252; see also, Messis, *Les eunuques*, 111–116.



Fig. 1. Saint Ignatios, mosaic, north tympanum of the naos, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey, 9<sup>th</sup> century?

As far as we know, there are at least nine and possibly as many as twelve surviving depictions of Patriarch Ignatios in various forms of visual art.<sup>9</sup> They were created between the ninth and the thirteenth century. Notably, these depictions portray the patriarch both with and without a beard. In view of the fact that Ignatios was certainly a eunuch of the ἐκτομίας category who had been castrated in puberty, along with other physiological changes characteristic of castrates, he must have also suffered a loss of facial and body hair, which means that in reality he could not have had a beard.<sup>10</sup> This raises the question of the reason behind his realistic depiction

<sup>9</sup> C. Mango, E. J. W. Hawkins, *The mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. The church fathers in the north tympanum*, DOP 26 (1972) 1–41, esp. 29–30, were the first to list the possible visual depictions of Patriarch Ignatios and found eight examples.

<sup>10</sup> The concept of eunuchs in Byzantium was closely associated with sterility [cf. K. M., Ringrose, *The perfect servant. Eunuchs and the social construction of gender in Byzantium*, Chicago–London 2003, 13–14; B. Krsmanović, D. Todorović, *O Teofilaktovoj odbrani evnuštva*, ZRVI 52 (2015) 91–126]. The terminological classification of eunuchs depended on the method of sterilization, as well as the age of the victim. For a typology of eunuchs v. *ibid.*, 99 n. 21, 102. The term ἐκτομίας (lat. castrati) denoted eunuchs who had their testicles completely removed. These men were sterile and impotent; they lost their male hormones and were prone to being overweight, wrinkled, hairless etc. (v. S. Tougher, *Byzantine eunuchs. an overview, with special refer-*

in some cases and his typological depiction as a bearded bishop in others.

It is interesting to mention that some portraits of Patriarch Ignatios were probably executed even during his lifetime. An episode in his *Vita* refers to the existence of two luxuriously produced manuscript volumes ordered by Photios to mock Patriarch Ignatios during their conflict. The volumes contained seven Acts of an imaginary synod created against Ignatios. Each of seven Acts started with a color image of Ignatios in the form of caricature with satirized names such as: the Devil, Antichrist, Source of Sin and etc.<sup>11</sup> According to the *Vita* Gregory Asbestos, metropolitan of Syracuse, painted the images.<sup>12</sup> However, the most notable and oldest preserved depiction of Ignatios is found on a mosaic in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in one of the niches on the north tympanum of the nave. It forms a part of a series of seven figures depicting the church fathers (fig. 1).<sup>13</sup> Based on a stylistic comparison with other Constantinopolitan monuments dating from the same period and an epigraphic analysis of the inscriptions discovered in the tympanum, the mosaic has been dated to the last two decades of the ninth century.<sup>14</sup> The date of Ignatios's death (October 23<sup>rd</sup> 877) is considered the *terminus post quem* for the manufacture of the mosaic. Ignatios is presumed to have been canonized by his successor Patriarch Photios soon after his death, probably between 877 and 886.<sup>15</sup> In addition, it has been determined that the production of the mosaic lasted around two decades and that it was completed under Leo VI the Wise (886–912).<sup>16</sup>

Ignatios is shown on the mosaic in the same fashion as most other church fathers in the north tympanum: standing dressed in episcopal vestments, which consist of a long *sticharion* with vertical red and blue *clavi* and a *phelonion* draped over it. An *omophorion* decorated with crosses is shown over the *phelonion*.<sup>17</sup> His right hand un-

*ence to their creation and origin*, in: *Women, men and eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, ed. L. James, London – New York 1997, 168–185).

<sup>11</sup> *Vita Ignatii* 54. 81–83.

<sup>12</sup> A. Kazhdan, H. Maguire, *Byzantine hagiographical texts as sources on art*, DOP 45 (1991) 1–23, 20. On the possible existence of the picture gallery of patriarch in the Patriarchal Palace during Iconoclasm v. A. Grabar, *L'iconoclisme byzantine. Dossier archéologique*, Paris 1957, 213–214; v. also, Mango, Hawkins, *The mosaics*, 28–29, n. 58.

<sup>13</sup> The north tympanum has three rows of decoration. The lowest zone shows the church fathers; the zone immediately above it depicts the prophets. The uppermost zone probably depicted the angels. For the possible reasons behind this choice of bishops and their location in the decoration of the interior. Cf. C. Mango, *Materials for the study of the mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul*, Washington D.C. 1962, 55–57; also, Mango, Hawkins, *The mosaics*, 6, 23–27; A. Ricci, *Reinterpretation of the "Palace of Bryas". A study in Byzantine architecture, history, and historiography*, Princeton 2008 (doctoral dissertation, Princeton University), 143–144.

<sup>14</sup> Mango, Hawkins, *The Mosaics*, 37–41.

<sup>15</sup> Ignatios's depiction together with the greatest of church fathers is interpreted as one of the aspects of the redemption efforts of Patriarch Photios (Mango, Hawkins, *The mosaics*, 38–39). Another opinion is that the mosaic depiction in Hagia Sophia was created in Ignatios's lifetime (Ricci, *Reinterpretation*, 145; v. also, K. Marsengill, *Portraits and icons between reality and spirituality in Byzantine art*, Turnhout 2013, 127–128).

<sup>16</sup> On the restoration of St. Sophia after the earthquake of 869 v. Mango, *Materials*, 65–66. The present condition of the church does not reflect the ninth century restoration, when the church had larger windows that allowed more light to enter and enhanced the visibility of the mosaics. Cf. Mango, Hawkins, *The mosaics*, 4; Ricci, *Reinterpretation*, 140.

<sup>17</sup> On the liturgical vestments of this period and their meaning v. M. Parani, *Fabrics and clothing*, in: *The Oxford handbook of Byzan-*



der the *phelonion* holds a Gospel Book and his left hand seems to support its upper border and point to it.<sup>18</sup> Ignatios's face is shown beardless, elongated, and youthful; his white hair, combed back on his forehead, frames his face like a skull-cap (fig. 2). His identification is facilitated by the inscription on the right (IGNATIOC) and left (O NEOC) of the figure, as well as the nimbus delineated in pearls around his head.<sup>19</sup>

It is precisely Ignatios's beardless face that sets him apart from the other two depictions of church fathers that have survived *in situ* in the north tympanum: St. John Chrysostom and St. Ignatios Theophoros. In Byzantine iconography, holy bishops were usually shown with a more or less prominent beard.<sup>20</sup> This was also confirmed by the reconstruction of lost mosaics depicting other church fathers in the north tympanum. The drawings and watercolors made by the Fossati brothers in the mid-nineteenth century show only Ignatios beardless, but even younger and with no trace of asceticism in his face, unlike the original depiction.<sup>21</sup> Patriarch Methodios, who might have also been a eunuch, but not a castrate, was shown by the Fossati brothers as an older man with a white beard and a white cap tied under his chin. The appearance of the cap has been associated with the fact that Methodios had his teeth pulled out and his jaw broken during the iconoclast period under Emperor Theophilos (820–842) and that he wore the cap to keep them in place.<sup>22</sup> The bearded depiction of Methodios is considered faithful. His possible eunuch status or sterility was not the result of a surgical intervention or the complete removal of testicles but rather of a possible illness or genital birth defect.<sup>23</sup> Hence his physical appearance showed no hormonal changes characteristic of castrates such as hairlessness. Unfortunately, the extant mosaic depiction in Hagia Sophia, in the chamber above the southwest vestibule, is of little help in recovering Methodios's original appearance.<sup>24</sup> The surviving image only shows the upper part of his face, from the eyes up, and a cap identical to the one



Fig. 2. Saint Ignatios, detail, mosaic, north tympanum of the naos, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey, 9<sup>th</sup> century?

illustrated by Fossati. Other surviving depictions show Methodios with a beard, such as the one in the sanctuary of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid (1294/1295)<sup>25</sup> or the one on the well-known icon depicting the Triumph of Orthodoxy (ca. 1400).<sup>26</sup>

The mosaic depiction of Patriarch Ignatios in Hagia Sophia is probably the most realistic and authentic and was created shortly after his death if not in his lifetime. The one characteristic that certainly deviates from reality in this portrait is his youthfulness. Perhaps the patron who commissioned the portrait wanted to highlight Ignatios's innocence, asceticism and devotion to the faith – characteristics frequently attributed to eunuchs.<sup>27</sup> Prominently positioned in the most important church in the Empire, this image of St. Ignatios indicates his own significance and role in the struggle for the true faith. If the cap tightly tied under Methodios's chin can be seen as a symbol and sign of his sacrifice for the faith,<sup>28</sup> then the beardless face of Ignatios signifies his martyrdom as a member of an imperial and iconodule family.

The depiction of Ignatios that is chronologically closest to the mosaic in Hagia Sophia is found on the foot of a chalice kept in the treasury of San Marco in Venice (fig. 3). The chalice seems to have originated in Constantinople in the late tenth or early eleventh century.<sup>29</sup> The

tine studies, ed. E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon, R. Cormack, Oxford 2008, 407–421, 413–417; see also, St. Germanus of Constantinople, *On the divine liturgy*, transl. P. Meyendorf, Crestwood – New York 1999, 65–67.

<sup>18</sup> Ricci, *Reinterpretation*, 142, emphasizes this hand gesture in both Ignatios's and Methodios's depictions as a distinctive sign that sets them apart from other church fathers in the series.

<sup>19</sup> This was an archaic iconographical feature. Cf. Mango, Hawkins, *The mosaics*, 28.

<sup>20</sup> A. Grabar, *Un calice byzantin aux images des patriarches de Constantinople*, *ΔΧΑΕ* 4 (1964–1965) 45–51, 46.

<sup>21</sup> Watercolors deviated even more than pencil drawings from the mosaic originals (Mango, *Materials*, fig. 63–65). For more on the Fossati brothers v. N. B. Teteriatnikov, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul. The Fossati restoration and the work of the Byzantine institute*, Washington, D.C. 1998.

<sup>22</sup> Mango, *Materials*, 52–53, fig. 66–68.

<sup>23</sup> Sources inform us that the patriarch was accused of sexual abuse and that he allegedly publicly showed his mutilated genitals to prove that he was indeed a eunuch and as such incapable of committing the crime he had been accused of; Methodios's impotence and sterility were presented as the work of St. Peter, *Theophanis Continuati Chronographiae*, Libri I–IV, ed. M. Featherstone, J. Signes Codoñer, Boston–Berlin 2015, 226–228; *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn, Berolini et Novi Eboraci 1973, 86–88. This legendary story is the only source that suggests that Methodios could have been a eunuch.

<sup>24</sup> For the images in the room above the south vestibule v. R. Cormack, E. J. W. Hawkins, *The mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul. The rooms above the southwest vestibule and ramp*, *DOP* 31 (1977) 175–251.

<sup>25</sup> S. E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the sacred mysteries. Program of the Byzantine sanctuary*, Seattle–London 1999, fig. 42.

<sup>26</sup> A. Weyl Carr, *Icon with the Triumph of Orthodoxy*, in: *Byzantium. Faith and power (1261–1557)*, ed. H. C. Evans, New Heaven 2004, 154–155.

<sup>27</sup> The purity, chastity, humility and piety of eunuchs is discussed by Theophylaktos of Ohrid. Cf. for example *Theophylakti Achridensis Orationes, Tractatus, Carmina*, ed. P. Gautier, CFHB XVI/1, Series Thessalonicensis, Thessalonicae 1980, 305, 319, 325; v. also, Krsmanović, Todorović, *O Teofilaktovoj odbrani*, 105, 108–109, 118–119.

<sup>28</sup> Ricci, *Reinterpretation*, 46.

<sup>29</sup> Grabar, *Un calice*, 50, dates the chalice to the first half of the tenth century. For other dating, see M. E. Frazer, *Chalice of the patriarchs*, in: *The treasury of San Marco Venice*, ed. D. Buckton, Milan 1984, 159–165; M. da Villa Urbani, *Chalice of the patriarchs*, in: *Byzantium*, 330–1453, ed. R. Cormack, M. Vassilaki, London 2008, 81.



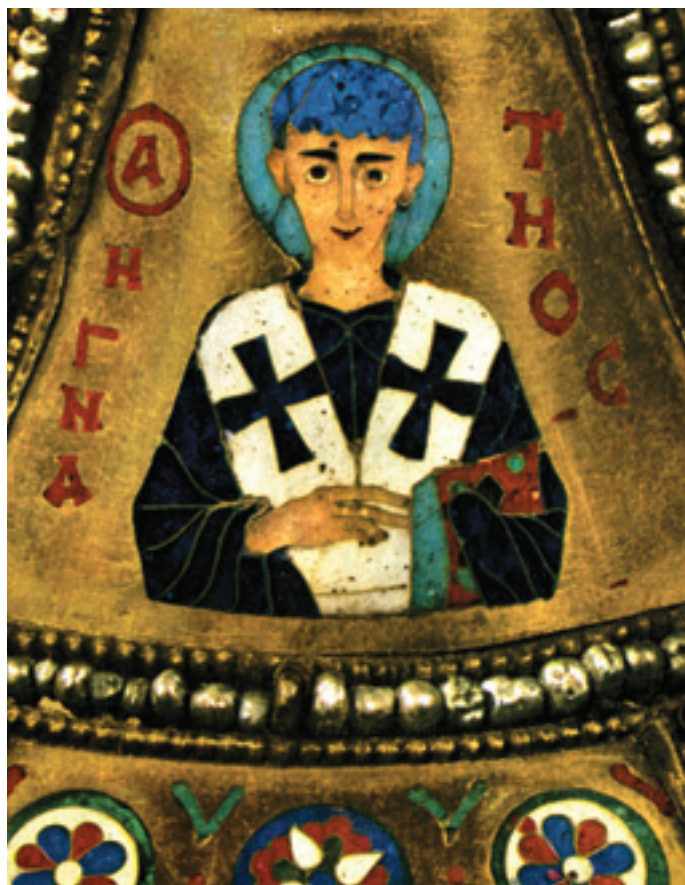


Fig. 3. Bust of Saint Ignatios, a chalice, enamel, the treasury of San Marco, Venice, Italy, late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century



Fig. 4. Bust of Saint Theophylaktos, a chalice, enamel, the treasury of San Marco, Venice, Italy, late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century

semicircular cup was carved in dark red dappled sardon-  
yx. The chalice is decorated with vertical gilded straps fea-  
turing portraits and ornaments in the cloisonné enamel  
technique. The rim of the chalice contains a Greek in-  
scription written in blue enamel: a quote read during the  
Eucharist (Mt. 26, 27–28).<sup>30</sup> The four medallions on the  
straps connecting the upper edge of the chalice to its foot  
feature portraits of four martyrs: Demetrios, Procopios,  
Theodore, and Akyndinos. The part that is of most inter-  
est to the matter at hand is the foot of the chalice, which  
is divided into four trapezoidal enamel panels with busts  
of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. John Chrysostom, Patri-  
arch Ignatios of Constantinople<sup>31</sup> and St. Theophylaktos,  
Bishop of Nicomedia.<sup>32</sup>

On the foot of the chalice Ignatios is shown in typi-  
cal episcopal vestments, as a beardless young man with a  
very elongated face that tapers towards the chin, large eyes  
and a thin mouth. Like in the previous case, the saint's hair  
is shown in the shape of a scull-cap that traces the outline  
of the head, with long bangs combed towards the forehead.  
The hair is rendered in a dark blue color, apparently emu-  
lating white (gray) hair, which stands in stark contrast to  
his boyish face. In Ignatios's case, the artist evidently strove

to indicate his eunuch status and therefore chose to depict  
him beardless and youthful, just like the mosaic image  
from Hagia Sophia. The use of darker shades of blue might  
have served to highlight Ignatios's middle age. The saint's  
figure is flanked on both sides by the inscription O A (ΥΙΟΣ)  
ΙΓΝΑ-THOC in red enamel. All of the four saints on the  
foot of the chalice have blue enamel nimbi.

Interestingly, the chalice also shows St. Theophy-  
laktos beardless and youthful, much like the depiction  
of St. Ignatios (fig. 4). In addition to their beardlessness,  
both portraits share an almost identical hairstyle and hair  
color. Assuming that the portrait represents the bishop  
of Nicomedia, the reason for the depiction of St. Ignatios  
and Theophylaktos one across the other on the foot of the  
chalice, as well as their facial similarity, could be the fact  
that they were both venerated as iconodules. However, the  
question remains if Theophylaktos was a eunuch, but it  
would explain the conspicuous resemblance between their  
two portraits.<sup>33</sup> The sources offer no explicit information  
about this. Another possibility to be borne in mind is that  
the chalice shows Theophylaktos Lekapenos, Patriarch of  
Constantinople (933–956),<sup>34</sup> who also seems to have been

<sup>30</sup> Frazer, *Chalice*, 159.

<sup>31</sup> On the identification of Patriarch Ignatios of Constantinople  
v. Grabar, *Un calice*, 47. The catalogue entry from the exhibition held  
in London in 2004, M. da Villa Urbani, *Chalice of the patriarchs*, 81,  
states that the portrait on the foot depicts St. Ignatios Theophoros and  
offers no further explanation.

<sup>32</sup> Theophylaktos was probably appointed the bishop of Nico-  
media during the reign of Michael I Rangabe, and as an iconodule  
clashed with Leo V the Armenian. He died between 817/8 and 842  
(PmbZ I/4, # 8295).

<sup>33</sup> There is also the possibility that St. Theophylaktos the Con-  
fessor was shown as a young beardless man, although he was not a  
eunuch. The icon depicting the Triumph of Orthodoxy shows him as  
an old man with a long beard (v. Weyl Carr, *Icon with the Triumph of  
Orthodoxy*, 154–155). In the fourteenth century Dečani Monastery, he  
is depicted as a young man, long-haired and beardless (v. M. Marković,  
*Pojedinačne figure svetitelja u naosu i paraklisima*, in: *Zidno slikarstvo  
manastira Dečana. Građa i studije*, ed. V. J. Đurić, Beograd 1995, 243  
–264, 256 n. 150).

<sup>34</sup> M. Sacopoulo, *A Saint-Nicolas-du-Toit. Deux effigies inédites de  
patriarches constantinopolitains*, CA 17 (1967) 193–202, 196 argues that  
the foot of the chalice portrays Patriarch Theophylaktos, and cites the fig-





Fig. 5. Patriarch Ignatios on his deathbed, miniature, the *Menologion of Basil II* (Cod. Vati. gr. 1613), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican city, late 10<sup>th</sup> or very early 11<sup>th</sup> century

a eunuch.<sup>35</sup> If the depiction is taken to represent the latter, then the dating of the chalice could be moved to the mid-tenth century and the *terminus ante quem* would be 956, the year of the patriarch's death.<sup>36</sup>

The chronologically closest to the foot of the chalice is the depiction of Patriarch Ignatios in two miniatures in the *Menologion of Basil II* (Cod. Vati. gr. 1613). The manuscript has been dated to the late tenth or very early eleventh century.<sup>37</sup> The *Menologion* bears testament to the ambivalent manner of depicting Patriarch Ignatios, as one of the miniatures shows him beardless and the other bearded.<sup>38</sup> The explanation for this discrepancy could be that the miniatures were painted by two different artists.<sup>39</sup> The first illustration is particularly noteworthy because it depicts the deposition of Patriarch Ignatios. The scene is found on page 134 of the

manuscript under the date of October 23 and was painted by a certain George, who also signed his work (fig. 5).<sup>40</sup> The center of the scene is dominated by Patriarch Ignatios lying on an elaborately decorated deathbed. The deathbed is situated in Ignatios's foundation, the monastery of *Satyros* on the Asian side of Constantinople.<sup>41</sup> The background features a domed edifice and a building with blind arcades supported by pillars; the deathbed with Ignatios's prostrate figure, dressed in typical episcopal vestments, his hands crossed on his chest and his eyes closed, is shown in front of the arcade. The saint's face is beardless, and seems to suggest a middle-aged man. His face is here rendered more vividly than in Hagia Sophia, but is framed by the same skullcap-shaped hair that has been combed forward, like in the mosaic depiction from Constantinople. The hair is shown as dark grey with white shading. Although beardless, and with some signs of an advanced age, the depiction of the face is idealized, since Ignatios is not represented here as an eighty-year-old man. The portrait of the deceased suggests that the artist either deliberately chose to show a younger version of the saint in a bid to emphasize his purity and chastity (supported by the fact that he was a eunuch) or that he simply followed an older iconographical model. However, he did not abandon the tendency to depict Ignatios realistically – not only in terms of his beardlessness, but also in terms of the setting of the entire composition. As the founder of the abovementioned monastery, Ignatios was buried there.<sup>42</sup>

ure's boyish appearance to support his claim. On Theophylaktos as a holy patriarch v. E. Moutafov, *Saints, eunuchs and iconography*, in: *Heroes, cults, saints*, ed. I. Georgova, E. Moutafov, Sofia 2015, 201–213, 204. Although Patriarch Theophylaktos was never canonized, it would not have been unusual to depict him as a saint. Cf. P. Miljković-Pepel, *Dva nepoznati fragmenta na freska od vodočka crkva*, ZSM 3 (2001) 34–48, 39.

<sup>35</sup> Sym. Mag. 324; PmbZ II/6, # 28192. Interestingly, Grabar hypothesizes a link between the depiction of St. Theophylaktos, the Bishop of Nicomedia, with Theophylaktos Lakapenos, Patriarch of Constantinople, (933–956). Cf. Grabar, *Un calice*, 49–50.

<sup>36</sup> The chalice could have been commissioned in the capital and gifted to the oratorium of St. Theophylaktos that was built in the imperial palace. The oratorium is assumed to have been built by Romanos Lakapenos or his son Theophylaktos. Cf. Frazer, *Chalice of the patriarchs*, 165; R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin* I/3, Paris 1969, 246.

<sup>37</sup> For the dating v. S. Der Nersessian, *Remarks on the date of the Menologium and the Psalter written for Basil II*, *Byzantion* 15 (1940/41) 100–125; I. Ševčenko, *On Pantoleon the painter*, *JÖB* 21 (1972) 241–249.

<sup>38</sup> The other miniature is discussed below, cf. *infra*.

<sup>39</sup> Mango, Hawkins, *The mosaics*, 30.

<sup>40</sup> I. Ševčenko, *The illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II*, *DOP* 16 (1962) 243–276, 245, 252; Ricci, *Reinterpretation*, 147–148.

<sup>41</sup> Ricci, *Reinterpretation*, 151; eadem, *The road from Baghdad to Byzantium and the case of the Bryas palace in Istanbul*, in: *Byzantium in the ninth century. Dead or alive?* Papers from the thirtieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1996, ed. L. Brubaker, Aldershot 1998, 131–149, 132.

<sup>42</sup> Ricci, *Reinterpretation*, 136; eadem, *The road from Baghdad*, 148.



Fig. 6. Saint Ignatios?, fresco in northwestern part under the choir, the Cathedral of St. Sophia, Kiev, Ukraine, first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century

In Kiev's Cathedral of St. Sophia there is a fresco of a standing figure, likely St. Ignatios, from the first half of the eleventh century (fig. 6).<sup>43</sup> He is represented in the northwestern part of the church under the choir. According to Vladimir Sarabianov, who identified the saint, Ignatios is depicted in company of another *iconophile*, Constantinopolitan Patriarch Germanos (715–730). Together they are part of a broader iconographic scheme of prophets, apostles and saints, which shows the historical development of the Church.<sup>44</sup> Both Patriarchs are represented without beards and dressed in ecclesiarch clothing. Patriarch Ignatios's portrait was overpainted in the nineteenth century, however, the eleventh-century layer has been restored to the bust-length. Although the portrait shows the saint with a youthful appearance, he is also rendered wearing his characteristic white hair combed forward in a skull-cap shape, holding a book in his hand and with dark circles under his eyes, marking his advanced age. Atypically, he is also given protruding ears.

<sup>43</sup> For the dating v. E. N. Boeck, *Believing is seeing. Princess spotting in St. Sophia of Kiev*, in: *Dubitando. Studies in history and culture in honor of Donald Ostrowski*, ed. B. J. Boeck, R. E. Martin, D. Rowland, Bloomington, IN 2012, 167–179.

<sup>44</sup> N. V. Gerasimenko, A. V. Zakharova, V. D. Sarab'ianov, *Izobrazheniia sviatykh vo freskakh Sofii Kievskoi, Chast' I. Vnutrennie gallerei*, VV 66 (91) (2007) 24–59, 45, also see, V. Sarabianov, *Relics and Images of Saints in the Sacred Space of St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev*, in: *Spatial icons. Performativity in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. A. Lidov, Moscow 2011, 364–392, 374–375.



Fig. 7. Saint Ignatios?, fresco fragment, west church in Vodoča, FYR of Macedonia, ca. 1037

A surviving fresco fragment showing a beardless bishop from the west church in Vodoča could indicate another depiction of Ignatios (fig. 7). The fragment was not discovered *in situ*, but under the floor of the original level of the sanctuary in its northeastern part. The fresco was probably part of the oldest wall paintings from ca. 1037.<sup>45</sup> The youthful beardless face suggests that the pictured saint could have been Patriarch Ignatios; however, the fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence, which shows only a smaller part the lower face and torso, precludes a more reliable conclusion.

A late eleventh century fresco in the Church of St. Nicholas of the Roof, Kakopetria, Cyprus, depicts Patriarch Ignatios, as evidenced by the inscription 'O 'ΑΓΙ(ΟC) 'ΙΓΝΑΤΙ(ΟC) on both sides of his nimbus (fig. 8).<sup>46</sup> On the soffit of the arch that connects the *prothesis* to the bema of the church, Ignatios is represented as a young beardless man with prominent eyes, dark circles under his eyes and a double chin. Unlike the previous depictions, here, his black hair with white streaks seems to be combed to the right. The depiction of St. Ignatios in the prothesis corresponds to the usual Byzantine iconographical scheme, which places images of bishops in the sanctuary or its vicinity.<sup>47</sup>

A similar representation is found in the Church of St. George in Naxos (fig. 9). The saint is pictured on an eleventh century fresco as a standing figure in episcopal vestments in the lower zone on the south wall next

<sup>45</sup> On this fragment and its possible attribution, as well as the dating of the wall paintings v. Miljković-Peppek, *Dva nepoznati*, 34–49.

<sup>46</sup> A. Stylianou, J. A. Stylianou, *The painted churches of Cyprus. Treasures of Byzantine art*, Nicosia 1997, 54–55.

<sup>47</sup> Gerstel, *Beholding*, 15–37.





Fig. 8. Saint Ignatios, fresco in prothesis, the Church of St. Nicholas of the Roof, near Kakopetria, Cyprus, 11<sup>th</sup> century

to the altar. The inscription 'Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ is still visible on his right, but the name of the saint on the left has not survived. However, the image is believed to represent Patriarch Ignatios.<sup>48</sup> This is suggested by the beardless face with a prominent double chin and the semicircular hair combed towards the forehead typical of his depictions, although in this case the hair is shown as black. The position of the saint's right hand, almost identical to the one in the Church of St. Nicholas, is also indicative of his identity.

The last known depiction of the beardless Ignatios is found on a menologion icon for the month of October from Mount Sinai (*ca.* 1200, fig. 10).<sup>49</sup> The saints are shown in triads, with five days in each row. In the middle of the fifth row from the top there is a standing figure of a saint with the inscription ὁ ἅγιος ἰγνάτιος κων(σ)τα(ντινου)πόλ(εως) on its right, which clearly confirms that this is the Ecumenical Patriarch Ignatios. The face is beardless and elongated with a long nose, deep-set eyes and very dark circles under his eyes. Unusually, in this image the saint's hair is parted in the middle. The portraits

<sup>48</sup> Μ. Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου, *Άγιος Γεώργιος ο Διασώστης της Νάξου. Οι τοιχογραφίες του 11ου αιώνα*, Αθήνα 2016, 54–56.

<sup>49</sup> *Holy image and hallowed ground. Icons from Sinai*, ed. R. Nelson, K. Collins, Los Angeles 2006, 199.



Fig. 9. Saint Ignatios?, fresco, the Church of St. George in Naxos, Greece, 11<sup>th</sup> century





Fig. 10. Saint Ignatios, detail, Menologion icon for the month of October, Mount Sinai, Egypt, ca. 1200

in this icon are extremely individualized, as shown by the example of Patriarch Ignatios.

There are four visual representations of Patriarch Ignatios with a beard. Notably, all are found in illuminated manuscripts. The most important and oldest among them is a miniature from the abovementioned Menologion of Basil II (Cod. Vati. gr. 1613). In a scene on page 420 depicting the Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist, Patriarch Ignatios is pictured along with Michael III the Amorian and other courtiers that were present at the uncovering of the Baptist's head. The miniature was painted by a certain Nestor (fig. 11).<sup>50</sup> Ignatios is shown here as an older man wearing episcopal vestments, with a white beard, hair and eyebrows, and a receding hair-line. Ignatios's head is turned towards the emperor, who



Fig. 11. The Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist, miniature, the Menologion of Basil II (Cod. Vati. gr. 1613), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican city, late 10<sup>th</sup> or very early 11<sup>th</sup> century

is the only figure in the scene with a nimbus around his head. The center of the scene is dominated by Michael III, while the Patriarch has a supporting role. The depiction of a eunuch patriarch with a beard was meant to serve the composition and was typologically executed according to established iconographical models. The presence of the emperor obviously made the individual characteristics of the patriarch irrelevant.

A similar composition was included in an eleventh century Gospel Lectionary now kept at the Dionysiou Monastery on Mount Athos (Dionysiou, cod 587, fol. 148r) (fig. 12).<sup>51</sup> The scene once again depicts the Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist attended by Michael III, Patriarch Ignatios and courtiers. Ignatios is shown with a very long white beard and white hair combed across his forehead. None of the depicted figures seem to have a nimbus around their heads; however, as the gilded background has suffered some damage, it is difficult to say if the patriarch originally had a nimbus.

Another eleventh century Gospel Lectionary shows Patriarch Ignatios with a long white beard and white hair combed back on his forehead (Cod. Vat. gr. 1156)<sup>52</sup>. In his part of the menologion for the month of October, Ignatios is depicted as a standing figure in a series of others on the page. The image bears a resemblance to other church fathers in the manuscript, which suggests that the artist did not pay particular attention to the individual characteristic of the patriarch's face and instead used a typological representation.

Finally, the numerous illustrations in the twelfth century Madrid manuscript of the Chronicle of Skylitzes (cod. gr. Vitr. 26–2)<sup>53</sup> include a historical scene depict-

<sup>51</sup> *The treasures of Mount Athos. Illuminated manuscripts, miniatures-headpieces-initial letters*, ed. S. M. Pelekanidis et al., Athens 1974, 434–446, 444; M. Dolezal, *Illuminating the liturgical word. Text and image in a decorated lectionary (Mount Athos, Dionysiou Monastery, cod. 587)*, Word & image 12 (1996) 23–60.

<sup>52</sup> I. Spatharakis, *An usual iconographic type of the seated evangelist*, ΔΧΑΕ 10 (1980–1981) 137–146, 138 n. 6.

<sup>53</sup> V. Tsamakda, *The illustrated chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid*, Leiden 2002, 7–29. For the most recent dating v. E. N. Boeck,





Fig. 12. *The Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist, miniature, Gospel Lectionary (Dionysiou, cod 587, fol. 148r), the Dionysiou Monastery, Mount Athos, 11<sup>th</sup> century*

ing the moment immediately preceding the appointment of monk Ignatios as Patriarch of Constantinople (fol. 76r) (fig. 13). The inscription *Consecration of Patriarch Ignatios* (χειρονεῖται πατριάρχης Ἰγνάτιος) stands above the scene.<sup>54</sup> Ignatios is shown receiving the news of his appointment from two ecclesiarches in white vestments; he is depicted in a sitting position as an older, white-haired and white-bearded man without an omophorion – the symbol of episcopal and patriarchal power,

✱

Most of the visual representations of the beardless Patriarch Ignatios discussed above suggest that the basic iconographical type of St. Ignatios the Younger was established in the early stage of the evolution of his cult, shortly after his canonization. In images that were meant to highlight the individual characteristics of his portrait, the artists obviously tended to depict Ignatios identifiable.<sup>55</sup> Ignatios's fate as a church dignitary was determined by castration in his puberty and it was precisely these circumstances that played the crucial role in the emergence of the saint's distinctive and recognizable model image. The importance of the depictions of St. Ignatios without a beard and with a youthful or rejuvenated face lies in the fact that it deviates from the widely accepted depiction of church dignitaries, in which the beard acts as a cultural, ideological and religious symbol.

*Imagining the Byzantine past. The perception of history in the illustrated manuscript of Skylitzes and Manasses*, Cambridge 2015, 32–41.

<sup>54</sup> Tsamakda, *The illustrated chronicle*, 118.

<sup>55</sup> On individualization in Byzantine portraiture v. E. Kitzinger, *Some reflections on portraiture in Byzantine art*, ZRVI 8/1 (1963), 185–195.



Fig. 13. *Consecration of Patriarch Ignatios, miniature, the Madrid Skylitzes, Codex Græcus Matritensis Ioannis Skylitzes (cod. gr. Vitr. 26–2), Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain, 12<sup>th</sup> century*

A sign of masculinity in antiquity, in the early Christian community beards continued to symbolically indicate the difference between an adult man and a boy. Some influential early church fathers promoted the beard as a sign of Christian masculinity. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – c. 215) claimed that a beard was a sign of man's superiority.<sup>56</sup> The secular sphere of the Byzantine society also emphasized the difference between two categories of the emperor's subjects: the so-called 'bearded' (βαρβᾶτοι) and

<sup>56</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus (The Instructor)*, 3. 11, in: *Ante-Nicene fathers. Translations of the writings of the fathers down to A.D. 325*, II, ed. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids 1956, 286.



eunuchs.<sup>57</sup> This official terminology suggested the classification of Byzantine officials into two groups: the bearded, whose masculinity was not questioned, and the beardless, who lacked this proof of masculinity and maturity.

However, alongside this understanding of the beard as an obligatory symbol of masculinity and virility, another line of thought emerged which did not see beardlessness as the absence of male characteristics. Hence, the lack of a beard could be interpreted as a symbol of youth, chastity or spirituality. It is noteworthy that Christian art depicts angels as young, without any conspicuous personal characteristics, and as a rule beardless.<sup>58</sup> The visual representations of early Christian martyrs and warrior saints also bear evidence to this. They are usually shown beardless, but this does not deny their masculinity. The lack of a beard only serves to suggest their youth and, more importantly, their spiritual purity and devotion to the faith.<sup>59</sup>

The ambivalence of bearded or beardless visual representations is also illustrated by the images of Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor. For example, his coinage established an idealized model that showed the emperor clean-shaven and youthful. This distinction served to differentiate Constantine from the numismatic visual representations of the remaining tetrarchs, who were depicted with beards; in addition, it established a link between Constantine and the Roman tradition, i.e. Octavian Augustus.<sup>60</sup> In contrast, in medieval Byzantine iconography Constantine the Great was always shown bearded<sup>61</sup> to correspond to the universally accepted symbol of maturity and power, which was particularly prominent in Byzantine society from the seventh to the fifteenth century.<sup>62</sup>

While depicting St. Ignatios beardless deviates from the iconography of bishops in Byzantium, it does not stand in contrast with the representation of saints in Christian art. Although Ignatios's beardlessness highlighted a realistic idiosyncrasy of his appearance (as a castrate, he certainly would not have had a beard), it should also be seen as a metaphor of another kind of Christian masculinity – a possible mark of monastic asceticism, which would have only been supported by the fact that he had been a eunuch. The Byzantine literary tradition, summarized in *Vita Ignatii*, describes his purity and the perseverance he showed during the internal strife in the church in which he was also personally involved: despite his beardlessness, his piety and spirituality brought a new

spiritual and Christian masculinity which was contrasted with the usual understanding of masculinity embodied in the bearded image of his opponent Patriarch Photios.<sup>63</sup> The significance of the beard as a symbol of virility was replaced by the miracles Ignatios performed both in his lifetime and after his death. *Vita Ignatii* underscores the miracles that transcend the physiological shortcomings of a eunuch saint; for example, the touch of his hair (on his head?) restored milk to a woman's breast, while oil from his grave cured another woman's infertility.<sup>64</sup>

The beardless depictions of Patriarch Ignatios are not the only deviations from the usual iconography of a bishop in Byzantium: Patriarch Germanos was portrayed as a beardless bishop and saint. As he is known to have been castrated at an age past the usual time for subjecting an individual to this intervention,<sup>65</sup> it follows that his portrait also reflected his beardlessness as a realistic individual characteristic. Unfortunately, earliest known of his portraits date from the tenth century, but all of them show the saint as aged and beardless (except one with a barely noticeable beard), with white hair, hollow cheeks, and deep wrinkles, the last being one of the most conspicuous characteristics of castrates.<sup>66</sup>

Unlike Germanos, one of the iconographical features of Ignatios's portraits was the emphasis on his youthful appearance. This could have been one of the iconographical elements that allowed a more readily observable distinction between the two eunuch patriarchs. The iconographical model that depicts St. Germanos of Constantinople as a beardless and wrinkled old man can be assumed to have been established before Ignatios's, which would have led to the need to differentiate the portraits of the two bishops by their age. In addition, it should be borne in mind that Ignatios's youthful face might have served to emphasize the torture he endured in his youth that would have underlined his chastity, purity and asceticism – the characteristics generally ascribed to eunuch monks.<sup>67</sup>

The examples that endowed Ignatios's portrait with individual characteristics show a tendency to align the image to a prototype. These portraits conform to the demands of the post-iconoclastic period, when Byzantine art sought to achieve faithful depictions of saints.<sup>68</sup> In their own way, the examples that show Ignatios with a

<sup>57</sup> N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris 1972, 125–135; v. also, Krsmanović, Todorović, *O Teofilaktovoj odbrani*, 102–103; on the term βαρβᾶτοι and its antonym ἐνόρχει v. ibid. 134 n. 4 (D. Todorović).

<sup>58</sup> M. Hatzaki, *Beauty and the male body in Byzantium*, New York 2009, 86–116.

<sup>59</sup> In this early period when the iconographical types of warrior saints and martyrs were established, the beard might not have been fashionable and was hence perhaps not seen as an explicit symbol of masculinity, courage, etc. Cf. Ch. Walter, *The warrior saints in Byzantine art and tradition*, Aldershot 2003, 285–86; S. Tougher, *Cherchez l'homme! Byzantine men. A eunuch perspective*, in: *The Byzantine world*, ed. P. Stephenson, London – New York 2010, 83–91, 86.

<sup>60</sup> S. Tougher, *Bearding Byzantium. Masculinity, eunuchs and the byzantine life course*, in: *Questions of gender in Byzantine society*, ed. B. Neil, L. Garland, Farnham 2013, 153–167, 155.

<sup>61</sup> O. F. A. Meinardus, *The beardless patriarch. St. Germanos*, *Makedonika* 13 (1973) 178–186, 180.

<sup>62</sup> Tougher, *Bearding*, 153.

<sup>63</sup> Messis, *Les eunuques*, 141–144.

<sup>64</sup> *Vita Ignatii* 112. 15–114. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Germanos was also a eunuch of the ἐκτομίας category. Cf. *Ioannis Zonarae Epitome historiarum, libri XIII–XVIII*, ed. Th. Büttner-Wobst, Bonn 1897, XIV, 222; L. Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I. von Konstantinopel (715–730). Versuch einer endgültigen chronologischen Fixierung des Lebens und Wirkens des Patriarchen, mit dem griechisch-deutschen Text der Vita Germani am Schluss der Arbeit*, Würzburg 1975, 222. 300–303; v. also, Messis, *Les eunuques*, 128 n. 48; v. also, PmbZ 2298, 31 et. n. 1.

<sup>66</sup> For the depictions of Patriarch Germanos and a comprehensive list of monuments v. V. Sarab'ianov, *Chitmye sviātye domongol'skoi Rusi v rospisiākh Sofii Kievskoi. K voprosu o formirovanii lokal'noi tradicii. Chast' I*, *Iskusstvoznanie* 3/4 (2014) 49–87, 72, aslo see, M. Radujko, *Kameno saprestolje i friz fresko-ikona u otlaru žičke crkve Vaznesenja Hristovog*, *Zograf* 29 (2002–2003) 93–117, 99, n. 47.

<sup>67</sup> For more details v. Krsmanović, Todorović, *O Teofilaktovoj odbrani*, 104–113, 118–120.

<sup>68</sup> H. Maguire, *The icons of their bodies. Saints and their images in Byzantium*, Princeton 1996, 100–146; Marsengill, *Portraits*, 112–137.



beard also provide evidence that Byzantine artists strove to establish a distinctive iconographical type of Ignatios's portrait. In scenes that depict Patriarch Ignatios as a participant in a historical or religious public event, the artists' focus was not on the individualization of shown figures. Here the patriarch was just a witness of the pictured event and was therefore depicted typologically. This adherence to established iconographical forms is also evident in the abovementioned menologion part of the Gospel Lectionary, which shows him as a bearded figure. In this sense, the image from the Madrid manuscript of the Chronicle of Skylitzes is particularly illustrative. Scholars have quite rightly questioned if, and to what extent, the illustrations of the Madrid manuscript, which originated in Sicily, truly reflect the reality of Byzantine society.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> M. Parani, *Look like an angel. The attire of eunuchs and its significance within the context of middle Byzantine court ceremonial*, in: *Court ceremonies and rituals of power in Byzantium and the medieval Mediterranean. Comparative perspectives*, ed. A. Beihammer,

An overview of the depictions of Patriarch Ignatios in Byzantine art certainly reveals the portraitists' tendency to keep the distinctive individual characteristics of the depicted saint. Patriarch Ignatios's cult was the strongest in the capital and left its mark in the period of the most intense activity of the eunuch community at court and in Constantinople in the tenth and eleventh century. The rise of the Komnenos dynasty to power (1081–1185) marked the beginning of the marginalization of eunuchs and seems to have led to the waning of the cult of St. Ignatios the Younger.

S. Constantinou, M. Parani, Leiden 2013, 433–465, 439, n. 23. Bente Bjørnholt and Liz James have suggested that the Madrid Skylitzes depicts eunuchs with beards because the artists prioritized showing their masculinity over their realistic appearance. Cf. B. K. Bjørnholt, L. James, *The man in the street. Some problems of gender and identity in Byzantine material culture*, in: *Material culture and well-being in byzantium (400–1453). Proceedings of the international conference (Cambridge, 8–10 September 2001)*, ed. M. Günbart et al., Wien 2007, 51–57.

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## Браде су битне. Ликовне представе патријарха Игњатија у византијској уметности

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У раду се анализира дванаест ликовних представа на којима је, по свој прилици, приказан свети Игњатије Цариградски, а које су настале у распону од IX до XIII века. Уочено је да је на већини представа патријарх Игњатије приказан без браде, што одговара чињеници да је био евнух из категорије ἐκτορίας. Анализирана су два за његове портрете специфична

иконографска елемента: безбрадост и младоликост. Закључено је да су аутори портрета патријарха Игњатија без браде тежили што реалнијем приказивању светитеља; с друге стране, безбрадост и младоликост имале су и метафоричко значење, које је истицало чедност и непорочност светитеља-евнуха.